



Charlie vs. Vlad*

The *true* story of Tortoise and the Hare

By Dani W., 5th Grade



Charlie just stared at Vlad. The bunny looked like he was afraid of his own shadow. But of course that was common if you.....actually, he didn't know when that was common.

Vlad stared back. He had always been afraid of starers, but this was worse. He couldn't believe he hadn't even stammered when he saw this weird green creature shoot out of the forest. Then another bunny appeared beside him.

"Vlad?" the mayor of Fluffville asked sternly. She was a tall, lean, bunny with sandy brown fur. She wore a ruffy aqua dress that looked softer than silk. Charlie, all muddy from the forest, felt embarrassed in front of this sophisticated-looking bunny.

"What is this young bunny doing here?"

"I'm a turtle." Charlie said, annoyed.

"Oh, really?" the mayor said. "Then why are you here? You know it's against the law for any creature except bunnies to come into this side of the forest. Are you a law breaker?"

"What?" Charlie said indignantly. "There's no rule like that anywhere else! That's totally unfair!"

Now, Vlademere Scaredybonbonpants was a scaredybonbonpants when it came to most things. True, Vlad was scared of heights, pink pillows, cats, dogs, turtles, geckos, frogs, computers, Bill Gates, exploding turnips, dust balls, broken pencils, glue bottles, his own shadow, Barack Obama, broccoli, dresses, clouds, Steve Jobs, nails, doorknobs, thumb drives,.....my point is that, despite his many phobias, he gets very emotional about the laws he lives by.

"Listen, bub!" Vlad said angrily, "Just go back to the place you came from!"

"I can't go back to Slowsville!" Charlie wailed. "I don't know the way!"

Vlad thought for a moment. *I can't let this law breaker stay, he thought. But I can't just ask him to leave, either.* Then he got an idea. *He's from Slowsville! He's from Slowsville!*

"I have a proposition for you," Vlad said smugly. *I'm being brave!* "How about I race you? Tomorrow, from Igor's Bakery to Carrot Square. If I win, you leave. If you win, your kind is welcome."

"Okay," Charlie said, smiling. Then Vlad remembered how the turtle shot out of the forest. *Oh no!* he thought. *What have I done!*

Vlad bit his nails. (He didn't know why he paid for manicures.) He was too scared to run. This law breaker was going to make it so scary things will be allowed in Fluffville! Maybe lions and tigers and bears will come! Vlad thought. Whatever those are. Then the mayor walked up.

"Don't worry," the mayor said. "I know you're too scared to run fast." She smiled, "I have some tricks up my sleeve, though." Vlad stared at her sleeve. "Not my actual sleeve, doofus!" she snapped, "Now just run," she sneered.

"On your marks!" a grey floppy-eared bunny shouted. "Get set! GO!"

Charlie shot forward. He looked at Vlad, who hopped timidly behind him. Then he focused on the road. But one minute later, he found himself in a deep hole. As he crawled out, Vlad hopped steadily in front of him.

Charlie jumped up. He ran forward. But before he could pick up speed, he found that his foot was stuck in the mud. He twisted and turned. He tugged on his foot with all his might. He slapped it with a fish. Finally, he escaped the mucky goo.

Vlad was really far ahead. Charlie couldn't slip up anymore if he was going to win. He had never lost a race. Neeveeer. He wasn't going to break that streak now. He took a deep breath, and shot forward.

Two minutes later he skidded to a halt. Ten feet in front of him there was a brick wall that he hadn't seen because he had been running so fast. He sighed, and climbed the wall. By the time he had ascended and descended the wall, Vlad was out of sight.

Vlad looked behind him. He couldn't even make out a dot to represent Charlie. *I'm winning!* he thought, *I'm winning!* Then he realized he was tired. And I mean tired. He sat down by a tree to rest. Five minutes later, he had dozed off.

Charlie didn't encounter any more obstacles, but he had all but lost hope. He trudged on, kicking up dust as he went. *Why didn't I talk about rules,* he thought. *Because they look too cute to be suspicious of,* he thought, and chuckled. *Well, at least when they throw you into the catacombs of Fluffville, you'll still have your humor.*

Then Vlad came into view, sleeping under a large oak tree. A wave of hope washed over Charlie, and he shot forward, breaking the big red ribbon stretched across the finish line.

The mayor stormed over to Vlad and shook him, and his eyes flashed open.

"You lost, doofus!" she shouted in his ear. He twitched.

"H-h-how?" Vlad stammered, frightened of the mayor's anger.

"You shouldn't sleep in a race!" she snapped.

Charlie's dad walked over to him. Charlie suddenly felt nervous. Charlie's father was very, very strict.

But all he said was "Gooood joob sonnrrrrrr." And a big grin crept across Charlie's face, and he hugged his father.

The End

*For the first 2 stories in this 3-part series, read "Vlad the Bunny" (June '09) & "Charlie the Turtle" (Sept. '09) in previous editions or on our web site.